

With the death of John H. Keetley at his home in Salt Lake City October 2, 1912, there passed from sight one of the most pic-

UTAH AND THE PONY EXPRESS

turesque characters of the mining business in early days. He was seventy-one years of age at the time of his death. Known in almost every mining camp in the west his adventures could fill a volume. The famous Last Chance property at Bingham was purchased from the original locator by Mr. Keetley for a horse and saddle, and he paid for building a cabin on the claim with a six shooter. After working the property for a year Mr. Keetley sold it for \$17,000. Since then the claim yielded about \$1,000,000 worth of ore. In the early seventies he was associated with mining operations in Little Cottonwood and later he went to Deadwood, South Dakota where he was manager of the Sir Roderick Dhu mine in 1877. Returning to Utah he was placed in charge of the Ontario drain tunnel No. 1 at Park City in 1881, and superintended the extension of the tunnel to the No. 3 shaft. Afterward he went to the Anglo-Saxon mine in Butte, Montana, then to the Kentucky mine in Shoup, Idaho, returning to Park City to take charge of the Ontario drain tunnel No. 2 in 1888. He also became associated with the Little Bell and Silver King Consolidated mines in that district. The little mining town of Keetley was named in his honor. He was a great lover of horses and owned some fine racing stock.

During the days of the Pony Express Jack was one of its most colorful riders, often being called "The Joyous Jockey." He was born November 28, 1841 and was reared in Marysville, Kansas. He rode the ponies the entire life of the Express. In later years he wrote the following letter in answer to a request concerning the riders of the Pony Express:

Mr. Huston Wyeth,
St. Joseph, Missouri.

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 17th inst. received and in reply will say that Alex Carlyle was the first man to ride the Pony Express out of St. Joe. He was a nephew of the superintendent of the stage line to Denver, called the Pike's Peak Express. The superintendent's name was Ben Ficklin. Carlyle was a consumptive and



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could not stand the hardships and retired after about two months trial and died within six months after retiring. John Frye was the second rider, and I was third, and Gus Cliff was the fourth. I made the longest ride without a stop, only to change horses. It was said to be 300 miles and was done a few minutes inside of twenty-four hours. I do not vouch for the distance being correct as I only have it from the division superintendent, A. E. Lewis, who said that the distance given was taken by his English roadmeter which was attached to the front wheel of his buggy which he used to travel over his division with and which was from St. Joe to Fort Kearney. The ride was made from Big Sandy to Ellwood, opposite St. Joe, carrying the east going mail, and returning with the westbound mail to Seneca without a stop, not taking time to eat, but eating my lunch as I rode. No one else came within sixty miles of equaling this ride and their time was much slower. The Pony Express, if I remember correctly started at 6 o'clock p.m., April 3, 1860, with Alex Carlyle riding a nice brown mare and the people came near taking all the hair out from the poor beast's tail for souvenirs. His ride was to Guittard's, 125 miles from St. Joe. He rode this once a week. The mail started as a weekly delivery and then was increased to semi-weekly inside of two months. The horses, or relays, were supposed to be placed only ten miles apart, and traveled a little faster than ten miles per hour so as to allow time to change, but this could not always be done, as it was difficult then in the early settlement of the country to find places where one could get feed and shelter for man and beast, and sometimes horses had to go twenty-five to thirty miles, but in such cases there were more horses placed at such stations to do the work, and they did not go as often as the horses on the shorter runs. At the start the men rode from 100 to 215 miles, but after the semi-weekly started they rode about 75 to 80 miles. My ride and those of the other boys out of St. Joe was 125 miles to Guitard's, but later we only rode to Seneca, eighty miles. The first pony started from the one-story brick express office on the east side of Third Street, between Felix and Edmond streets, but the office was afterwards moved to the Patee House.

At 7 o'clock a.m., we were ordered from the stables two blocks east of the Patee House which was the signal for the ferry boat to come from Ellwood and to lie in waiting at the landing until our arrival. We rode into the office and put on the mail, which consisted of four small leather sacks six by twelve inches, fastened onto a square holder which was put over the saddle. The sacks were locked with little brass locks much like one sees today on dog collars, and the sacks were sewed to the holders, one in front and one behind each leg of the rider. When the mail was put on and the rider mounted on his race

horse, which was always used out of St. Joe to the Troy Station, nine miles from Ellwood, he bounded out of the office door and down the hill at full speed, when the cannon was fired again to let the boat know that the pony had started, and it was then that all St. Joe, great and small were on the sidewalks to see the pony go by, and particularly so on the route that they knew the pony was sure to take. We always rode out of town with silver mounted trappings decorating both man and horse and regular uniforms with plated horn, pistol, scabbard and belt, etc. and gay flower-worked leggings and plated jingling spurs resembling, for all the world, a fantastic circus rider. This was all changed, however, as soon as we got on the boat. We had a room in which to change and to leave the trappings until our return. If we returned in the night, a skiff or yawl was always ready and a man was there to row us across the river, and to put the horse in a little stable on the bank opposite St. Joseph. Each rider had a key to the stable. The next day we would go to the boat, cross the river, bring our regular horse and our trappings across to the St. Joe side. We stayed in St. Joe about three days and in Seneca about the same length of time, but this depended pretty much on the time that we received the mail from the west. The Pony Express was never started with a view to making it a paying investment. It was a put-up job to change the then Overland mail route which was running through Arizona on the southern route, to run by way of Denver and Salt Lake City, where Ben Holladay had a stage line running tri-weekly to Denver and weekly to Salt Lake.

The object of the Pony Express was to show the authorities at Washington that by way of Denver and Salt Lake to Sacramento was the shortest route, and the job worked successfully, and Ben Holladay secured the mail contract from the Missouri to Salt Lake, and the old southern route people took it from Salt Lake to Sacramento. As soon as this was accomplished and the contract awarded, the pony was taken off, it having fulfilled its mission. Perhaps the war also had much to do with changing the route at that time.

JAY G. KELLEY

Boliver Roberts, western superintendent of the Pony Express, hired Jay G. Kelley to help establish relay stations as far east as Roberts Creek because of his knowledge of the surrounding country. For a time he served as assistant station keeper at Cold Springs, but, early in 1860, one of the riders was killed by Indians and Kelley, weighing only one hundred pounds, became an express rider for the duration. After the "Pony" days were over Jay became a captain of Company C. in the later years of the Civil War and when peace was again restored between the North and South, he went to Denver,



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the years of construction of the Ontario-Daly Drain Tunnel remember "Jack" Keetley for his kindness to them as they romped over the hills under which his men were digging. Years later, George A. Fisher, prominent cattleman and land developer, named the community which developed in the valley below the mining project, Keetley, in honor of his "childhood hero."

The Keetley area was first prospected around 1875 and 1876. When David Keith and Thomas Kearns were prospecting in the mountains that produced the great mines of Park City, their fellow prospector, David Fisher, turned south and laid claim to the "Columbus," a tract which



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was later incorporated with other holdings to form the "Star of Utah," which in turn became the New Park Mine.

The first major effort to produce ore in Wasatch County was the McCune Tunnel. This was driven into the mountains west of Keetley before the turn of the century, but to no avail. About the same time the McHenry Shaft was sunk in the same area, but the unfortunate prospectors, it was later discovered, missed a vast vein of ore by only 18 feet.

Another mining adventure, The St. Louis-Ontario, was conducted directly above the spot where the portal of the drain tunnel was later placed. This project also failed, perhaps because it was focused too high on the Blue Ledge slope.

In spite of these failures, the lure of gold and other precious metals enchanted many and prospecting continued. In the early 1900's the East Utah shaft was sunk, and modest fortunes sank with it. In 1905 the Columbus Tract on Bonanza Flat was worked until lack of capital ended the venture.

Further down the slope in the Glen Allen, sometimes known as the "Glencoe" excavation, hundreds of thousands of dollars were invested in determined efforts to locate pay dirt. A refining mill was constructed on the property through which discovered ore was reduced to concentrate. In 1907 John Fisher and Gail Fisher took a contract to transport this refined ore from the mill to the Denver and Rio Grande Depot in Heber City, a distance of about 12 miles. However, the Allen fortune was spent before the coveted silver vein was located.

The project "Vallejo" lay further south in the mountains west of Jordanelle, and was worked intermittently for several years, even though a heavy percentage of iron in the ore made transportation a serious problem.

William Trevithick and John Fisher leased the Vallejo property and supplied work for many Wasatch County miners and teamsters until this venture too ended in disaster. George McDonald, one of the teamsters, was headed toward Heber City with a wagon load of ore and when he drove onto the Provo River bridge northwest of the present Heber Light and Power plant, the bridge buckled, sending him and half his wagon one way and the team and the rest of the wagon and ore the other way. Mr. McDonald escaped alive, but the wagon and team were lost, and the bridge was gone. Because the ore from Vallejo could not command sufficient price to warrant construction of a new bridge and better road, the project failed.

Another persistent attempt at prospecting for ore in northern Wasatch County was the Nelson-Green, which was located in rolling hills some two miles east of Lee's Ranch. After several years of effort, the Nelson Brothers of Park City sold the property to Daniel Knold, who renamed it the Park Knold, and continued to work his claim with some profit.

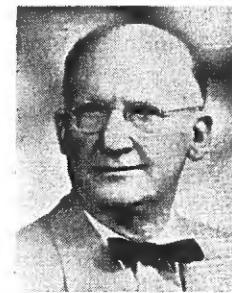
The major mining development in the Keetley area began about 1921 when the Park Utah Mining Company was formed. The company con-



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the years of construction of the Ontario-Daly Drain Tunnel remember "Jack" Keetley for his kindness to them as they romped over the hills under which his men were digging. Years later, George A. Fisher, prominent cattleman and land developer, named the community which developed in the valley below the mining project, Keetley, in honor of his "childhood hero."

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